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ABSTRACT

In 1996, South Carolina's Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College (CMTC) participated in the Exploring America's Communities project sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The project works to strengthen the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture at community colleges. The primary goal of CMTC's action plan was to broaden the scope of its existing course offerings to include resources that could be used concurrently with both literature and history. These resources would focus on cultural pluralism and how that pluralism shaped the American identity. The strategy was to develop and implement concurrent U.S. History and American literature courses focusing on the period following the Civil War and Reconstruction. The plan also included the development of a one credit hour seminar course that would address the theme of integrating American history and American literature. Course revisions have been completed and reviewed for a new history course. The college also developed an institutional self-study in which all AACC team members are responsible for chairing study committees and preparing a report. Faculty in the Arts and Sciences Division were very receptive and enthusiastic. Overall, the major outcomes of the project will not be fully developed until the seminar course is implemented in spring 1997; no obstacles are expected. The grant has received an extremely positive response among faculty and has created spin off projects across the curriculum. (HAA)

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Chesterfield/Marlboro Technical College AACC Progress Report

In: National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity Program Book
(New Orleans, LA, January 18-19, 1997)

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AACC PROGRESS REPORT

Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College is a two year post-secondary institution. The college is located in the northeastern part of South Carolina and serves a large three-county geographic area. The area is rural, although over 12 new industries have located in the service area during the past twenty years. These new industries have brought diversity to our communities from countries of Germany, Japan, England, and France.

As one of sixteen technical, state supported two year colleges, Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College, established 1968, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The college offers a variety of associate degree, certificate, and diploma programs. Currently, there are 1026 students attending Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College in twenty-eight programs. A majority of the students are first generation college students and desire degrees, diplomas, or certificates that will lead to job placement, job advancement, or college/university transfer. The college has twenty-four full time faculty and approximately thirty-five part time faculty. Day and evening classes, distance learning classes, and off campus classes are provided.

The College is committed to serving the residents of the region, to provide post-secondary educational opportunities and to provide students with a meaningful educational experience. During the 1996-97 academic year, the college is engaged in the process of an institutional-wide self study for reaffirmation of the Southern Associate of College and Schools. Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College is a growing institution in its twenty-sixth year of operation. Committed to the growth of the individual, the community and to the improvement of the quality of life for its citizens.

The primary goal of Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College's Action Plan was "to broaden the scope of its existing course offerings to include resources that could be used concurrently with both literature and history. These resources would focus on cultural pluralism and how that pluralism shaped the American identity."

I. Anticipated Outcomes will be:

- A. increased awareness of the uniqueness of the American experience
- B. recognition of the interconnectedness of American history and American literature
- C. introducing the student to the diversity that is evident throughout the United States, in South Carolina, and the region served by Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College
- D. strengthening the existing courses and curriculum
- E. initiating the students exposure to common ground themes, individuals, and ethnic/cultural groups
- F. building communication skills

II. Strategy:

Our plan will be to develop and implement concurrent United States History and American Literature courses focusing on the period following the Civil War and

Reconstruction. This will provide the greatest opportunity to infuse common ground themes and pluralism/diversity into a college-course sequence. The parallels in literature and history are relevant to any discussion of common ground themes and American pluralism.

Included in our plan will be the topical study and review of:

1. Native Americans
2. Afro-Americans
3. European Americans
4. Asian Americans
5. Historical and literary parallels

During the year, the team has followed the Action Plan that was developed at the Washington Conference. The plan included the development of a one-semester hour seminar course that would address the theme of integrating America literature and American history. This seminar course will be offered concurrently with America Literature II and American History II with the historical time frame c.1890-1996. Course objectives have been developed, audiovisual resources identified and library holdings have been evaluated. A list of speakers is currently being developed and expanded.

The new seminar course has been designed to expose students to common unifying themes of the American experiences. The parallels between American literature and history will be examined over a fifteen week period. Students will meet for a one-hour weekly class session to discuss, interpret, and analyze the individuals and groups that define Americans. Topics will include an examination of Native-Americans, Africa-Americans, Asia-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and European-Americans contribution to the literature and history of the United States. Special emphasis will be

placed on interpreting the question, "What is an American and what has been the American experience?"

The AACC grant team requested the one credit hour seminar course to be included in the Catalog of Approved courses for the State Technical college system. This application was submitted by the College administration and was approved on November, 1996. The course will be facilitated by a team of English and History faculty and will be implemented in the Spring semester 1997. Approval for the designated course was received in November 1996.

Course outlines and syllabic revisions have been completed and reviewed by the team, Division Chairperson, and the NEH mentor. The new course, HIS 203, is included in the spring course schedule and all academic advisors in the Division of Arts and Sciences will be encouraging students to register. Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical college has developed an extensive resource list of audiovisual support materials for use in the seminar course. These purchases are dependent upon the availability of financial resources. Guest speakers will be dependent on two contingencies: honoraria and availability. The team has identified several speakers and, as indicated previously in the report, is continuing to seek appropriate individuals who would be willing to speak.

The site visit by the mentor was completed on November 21 and all components of the Action Plan were reviewed. The team is pleased to report that we have been ahead of schedule and feel that we have moved aggressively towards accomplishment our Action Plan.

As previously indicated, the college is developing its institutional self-study. All AACC team members are responsible for chairing self-study committees and for

preparing the self-study report. Additionally, the college is currently renovating some of its buildings. This necessitated some unanticipated moves of classrooms and faculty offices during the fall semester.

The team has had the opportunity to incorporate some of the objectives in the courses that were taught in the fall semester. Although our grant proposal and Action Plan identify both American History II and American Literature II as the focus of our efforts, the team faculty included common themes of "American culture" into the American history I and American Literature I courses.

The College faculty has been informed of the grant and met with the team to discuss the implementation of the plan in the Spring semester. Faculty in the Arts and Sciences Division were very receptive and enthusiastically support this major instructional effort. Through the mentor's visit, Arts and Sciences faculty had the opportunity to receive an update on the grant proposal, to receive external support and encouragement of the project, and to have questions answered.

Overall, the major outcomes of the project will not be fully developed until the seminar course has been implemented in the Spring semester (January - May, 1997). The project is on-going and we do not foresee any major obstacles to completing the grant requirements. We hope that this project will serve as a springboard for more cross curricular efforts to integrate American themes into college courses.

The team will implement the final phase of the Action Plan in January 1997. This phase will include the implementation of the seminar course, registration of students in the course, dissemination of information to faculty advisers to promote the grant and the

seminar, and participation of a team member in the AACCS National Conference in January.

The response of colleagues to the grant has been extremely positive. A spin-off to this grant activity will be to connect the objectives across the curriculum. The work that has been accomplished with our participation in the grant will also be applicable on a statewide level through the South Carolina International Education Consortium. Course outlines will reflect statewide initiatives to internalize courses in social sciences, humanities, and communication. The objectives that were developed for the seminar course will also be applicable to the efforts of the SCIEC. The AACC grant has had a positive impact not only for Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College's efforts to strengthen existing courses and curriculum, but also for statewide initiatives.

With full implementation targeted for January, the team will integrate the themes of American identity, the forces that divide and unite us, and what we as Americans have in common. Within the context of the seminar course, students will discuss and evaluate these major themes while exploring American literature and history.